3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

excellent protection from the winter blizzards that frequently sweep across the open plains, and horses could always forage on cottonwood bark.

Growing in the sandy soil along the larger streams were extensive thickets of plum bushes and grapevines; and in much of the eastern portion, pecans, walnuts, haws, and persimmons contributed to the food supply of the Comanches. The mesquite, the tree most commonly found, provided wood for fires and its beans were valuable food for both people and horses. The rocky hills and sides of canyons were covered with scrubby cedar. Other trees found here and there were the ash, elm, redbud, oak, willow, bois d'arc, hackberry, chinaberry, cottonwood, and chaparral.

During the hot, dry summers, the area appeared to be a desert, but shortly after a spring or summer rain, its wide expanse became a sea of nutritious grass. Its warm, salubrious climate, the abundance of edible plant products, and the millions of wild animals which provided food, clothing, and shelter made the area a paradise for nomads who lived by hunting. The Comanche was well off and rarely haunted by the spectre of starvation.

To the west were the Spanish and Pueblo settlements of New Mexico, within striking distance of a Comanche raiding party, or near enough for trade, but sufficiently removed to leave the raider safe from any punitive force that might attempt to pursue him through the adjacent mountainous terrain and across the wide, level expanse of the intervening *Llano Estacado*. The watering places and landmarks were so few as to make any expedition into the region extremely hazardous except for those thoroughly acquainted with the routes.

To the south lay a great expanse of wild waste in the Big Bend country; through this ran a network of Indian trails, by way of water holes, from the central homeland of the Comanches into northern Mexico. Beyond the Río Grande the settlements of northern Mexico were isolated and poorly defended. Striking across this wasteland, the Comanches raided settlements far south of the river, returning with many captives and thousands of horses. The great desert expanse prevented pursuit by forces sufficiently formidable either to punish the marauders or to recapture the plunder, and the Comanches prospered as plunderers.

24: Richardson H-4 (no date) 1929 NO6 Comanche NO6
(1854-1859) Texas

657 States Government failed to take into consideration many difficulties peculiar to the Texas Indian situation as well as the inherent characteristics of the plains tribes not found in the Indians of other regions.

Establishing the Reservation

The question of a permanent home for the Indians of Texas was often raised during the decade following annexation; but the problem was difficult to solve, especially since the state maintained that neither the Indians nor the United States had any property rights in the Texas public domain. Under the terms of annexation the state had shifted to the Federal Government the responsibility of managing the Indians but had retained her public lands. Thus, the savages were regarded as tenants at will and [423] in its effort to keep them pacified the United States Indian service had to contend with the steady encroachment of the settlers.

178 Naturally the misery and poverty of the savages increased
511 from year to year and the problem of restraining them grew pro-
657 portionately greater. The following words are given as those of Ka-tem-e-see, a Southern Comanche chief:

178 829 [224]

> Over this vast country, where for centuries our ancesters roamed in undisputed possession, free and happy, what have we left? The game, our main dependence, is killed and driven off, and we are forced into the most sterile and barren portions of it to starve. We see nothing but extermination left us, and we await the result with stolid indifference. Give us a country we can call our own, where we may bury our people in quiet.[2]

657 101 East of the Comanches, along the valleys of the upper Brazos and Trinity rivers, were Caddo, Anadarko, Kichai, Haini, Tawakoni and other Indians whose condition was quite as desperate as
657 that of the Comanches. Finally after one or more "location" bills had failed, the Legislature of Texas by an act of February 6, 1854, authorized the Federal Government to select not more than twelve leagues of land to be used for Indian reservations.[3] Captain Ran-

[113] 2. Horace Capron, United States Indian Agent in Texas, to Howard, September 30, 1858. Ms., in the University of Texas Library, photostat copies of papers in the United States Indian Office.

[113] 3. H. P. N. Gammel, Laws of Texas, III, 1496-1498.

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

WHISKEY NIGHTS

439 ONLY BY A CONSIDERABLE SEARCH could anyone be found in all southwest Oklahoma Territory lower down on the social scale than the man who peddled whiskey to the Comanches. There were reasons for his low rating, even aside from the fact that the peddler was a breaker of both the United States law and the law of the territory of Oklahoma.

177 [181] [273] At the turn of the century, the Comanche warrior was only twenty-six years from his war trails. Many considered him a savage with only a superficial veneer of civilization; dangerous when sober, he was doubly feared when drinking.

[157] 273 Nor was it considered sporting to tempt him, as the average old Comanche's resistance was nil. The most cogent argument against selling the Comanche liquor was financial. A dollar spent by the average Comanche family man for liquor meant his family was denied its value in necessities.

[435] 262 435 511 The going price of a pint of cheap whiskey from the Comanche bootlegger was five dollars. This amount would supply a family of five with ample food for a week: a twenty-four-pound sack of flour, four pounds of dry salt bacon, two pounds of good coffee, eight pounds of sugar, ten pounds of good boiling beef (the Comanche seldom fried beef), seventy-five cents for dry onions and assorted

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

vegetables, and seventy-five cents for smoking tobacco and sweets for the children.

Most Indian families lived in meager comfort if the head of the household neither drank nor gambled. Of course, Indians who were compulsive gamblers lowered their families' standard of living also. The gambler's family had a feast-or-famine existence at best.

There is this to be said for gambling money—much of it stayed in the tribe, while money spent for liquor was gone forever. It is easy to understand why decent people deplored the selling of whiskey to these wards of the government.

One recurring incident of Comanche drinking, however, became an amusing interlude to people living close to our store. It occurred in the little inland town of Faxon, Oklahoma Territory, and began immediately after the opening of Comanche land for homesteading in 1901.

The old couple involved in the incident have children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren living. Let's call the father of the family Old Warrior. He was one of the better-to-do Indians in worldly goods. He had quite a few horses, a few beef cattle, a good hack, a nearly-new small lumber wagon, and good harness, and the family as a whole owned several stock saddles.

But when Old Warrior and his woman came to town for whiskey they never drove. They would ride double on a little, fat, gentle mare, the kind of mount the Indians termed a squaw horse—meaning a safe horse for anyone to ride. It was on such a mount the little folks learned to ride solo. Instead of a saddle, Mr. and Mrs. Old Warrior rode on a blanket, folded so both could sit on it.

Of course the mount was a dead giveaway, as they only used the little mare when they came for whiskey. Another giveaway was that they would arrive in town near dusk, long past the time they would start for home when driving. The first year or two, when not drinking, they would take a roundabout road home. But on whiskey nights, their errand accomplished, they rode straight for home, point to point across the prairie.

Ordinarily they were a friendly family, and once their other errands were attended to, they made our store their stopping place. They always tied their horses to our hitchrack, if there was room. But when on a whiskey trip, they left their friendliness at home and never came to our store. Nor did they enter any other place of business.

For some time there was a vacant store building just to the east